

**Salar Ahmadian**

FROM PAST  
TO PRESENT



# **Salar Ahmadian**

January 14 - February 28, 2013

They dance before you – swift circular ribbons cast in a multitude of vibrant colours and forms. They come together in bountiful clustered shapes and then break apart to trail off on their own; they knot and intertwine repeatedly in continuous movement to spontaneously create the formations which are presented before the beholder. These are the leftovers of words – the remnants of previously construed calligraphic forms now transformed into a myriad of abstract shapes.

Iranian artist Salar Ahmadian's most recent works weave together text and colour, tradition and modernity. Entitled From Past to Present, in his most extensive solo show to date Ahmadian delves beyond the calligraphic script to present a new visual language akin to the symbolism of Pop Art or the serendipitous creative process of Surrealism. In a manner which recalls the techniques of Jackson Pollock and Rothko, on his canvas the artist compromises between his artistic will, the uncertainty of the brushstroke and his imagination.

For Ahmadian, his creative process is based upon the crux of his Persian heritage and the achievements of Contemporary Western art history. As found in the artist's previous paintings, these new works show how he has once again abstracted the calligraphic form so that the formal resemblance to the traditional script is made clear, and yet the characters are devoid of a clear textual meaning; they are so abstracted that it is impossible to know of what they first stood for.

While the artist studied calligraphic art at university, he also desired to move calligraphy away from merely a traditional representation to a form which included the abstract synthesis of the present. As the title of the exhibition suggests, these works showcase a way to approach the differences between the past and the present: Ahmadian couldn't arrive at these present shapes and colours had he not been influenced by the past.

The works incorporate colours which refer to ideas of happiness, vitality and energy. Their vibrant colouring is just as strong as the movement each professes, while their imaginary abstract forms recall the shape of a colourful Iranian carpet or the country's wild eternal gardens. Their lurid shapes nevertheless push beyond specific Persian references that were more relevant in Ahmadian's previous work whereby he relied more heavily on the symbolism of Persian miniatures and traditional Iranian culture. He now embraces the contemporary present.

While each of the works is devoid of a title, their formal qualities still transport the spectator into another world – one which is not confined by strict adherence to guidelines, rules and regulations. The beholder in turn is led to dream up scenarios and let his imagination reinterpret the scene freely as according to his feelings of the moment.

Ahmadian's use of the calligraphic form thus opens up the possibilities of a range of subject matters including philosophical ideas relating to mortality and immortality – the latter visualised through the continual breadth of movement of the colours and forms, while the former might be seen in the intertwining of the lines into a tight embrace.

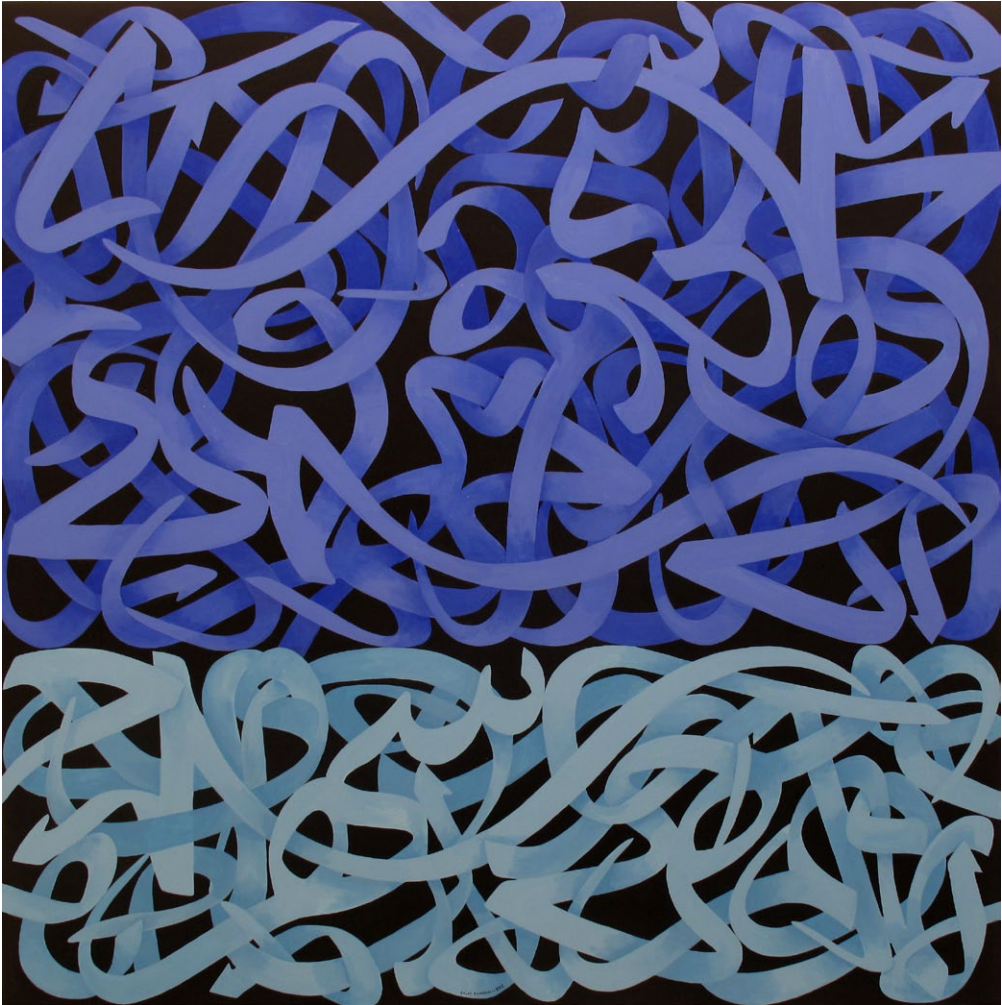
And yet Ahmadian's new works also seem to play games with the viewer's perception. The long calligraphic forms are thick and almost sculptural in shape – creating what appears to be tangible ribbons which constantly twist and turn around each other. These paintings pay reference to Ahmadian's work as a goldsmith, sculptor, designer and traditional calligrapher while also recalling major architectural and artistic elements pivotal to the history of his homeland such as the structure of Iranian mosques and the Takht-e Jamsid otherwise known as Persepolis and also the detail and colour found in Persian miniature painting as well as traditional gilding and metalwork.

Yet after such an embrace of the aesthetic forms of the past, Ahmadian pays heed to the present. He makes reference to the freedom of the Abstract Expressionists painters, their surrender to the force of gravity, the unknown and the undefined while also maintaining a sense of logic and control within their work. As Ahmadian shows, it is a delicate balance to adhere to on the canvas – his precisely painted calligraphic lines are at once clearly defined and yet free. The structure is there but the substance must be recreated; the paintings declare the importance of the past but desperately desire to reconcile it to the present. As Ahmadian himself states, "I wanted to create a special style of calligraphy that would become noteworthy for the Europeans, Americans and also the Arab world." The artist's abstracted supple, smooth and boldly coloured lines passionately desire to bridge the East and the West through the simplicity of abstract shapes.

Rebecca Anne Proctor, Editor-in-Chief, Masquerade Magazine - January, 2013



*Salar Ahmadian* / "Untitled" / 2012 / acrylic on canvas / 183x168 cm



*Salar Ahmadian* / "Untitled" / 2012 / acrylic on canvas / 182x182 cm



Salar Ahmadian / "Untitled" / 2012 / acrylic on canvas / 140x245 cm





*Salar Ahmadian* / "Untitled" / 2012 / acrylic on canvas / 182x182 cm



*Salar Ahmadian* / "Untitled" / 2012 / acrylic on canvas / 190x190 cm



*Salar Ahmadian* / "Untitled" / 2010 / acrylic on canvas / 182x182 cm

# Biography

## Salar Ahmadian

1957, Iran

### Selected Solo Exhibitions:

2010 Mah e Mehr Gallery, Tehran, Iran  
2010 Niavaran Cultural Center, Tehran, Iran  
2009 Niavaran Cultural Center, Tehran, Iran  
2008 Hunar Gallery, Dubai, UAE  
2008 Chelsea Gallery, London, England  
2008 CCZ Gallery, Paris, France  
2007 Lan Tan Gallery, Vancouver, Canada  
2006 Arta Gallery, Toronto, Canada  
2005 Georgetown Gallery, Washington, USA  
2004 Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, USA  
2003 Celebrity Center International, California, USA  
2003 Hourian Fine Art Gallery, San Francisco, USA  
2003 Le Palais Oriental, Montreux, Switzerland  
2002 Emory Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia, USA  
2001 Boushahri Gallery, Kuwait, Kuwait  
2001 Rockville Gallery, Maryland, USA  
2001 Art Studio, Vancouver, Canada  
2000 Cultural Centre, Köln, Germany  
1999 Total Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE  
1998 Castle of Art, New York, USA  
1995 Gallery Aurum, Lausanne, Switzerland  
1994 Manly Museum Gallery, Sydney, Australia  
1994 Bernadettes Gallery, Vancouver, Canada

### Auctions:

2012 Chirsties Auction, Dubai, UAE  
2011 Art Expo, Tehran, Iran  
2011 Chirsties Auction, Dubai, UAE  
2011 Art Expo, Kuwait  
2010 Chirsties Auction, Dubai, UAE

The publication of this catalogue coincides with an exhibition of the same title at Etemad Gallery Dubai - January 14 - February 28, 2013.  
Copyright © 2012 Etemad Gallery for the reproduced works by Salar Ahmadian.





Unit 12, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8, Exit 43 SZR,  
Al Quoz, Dubai, UAE  
P.O. Box: 390653  
Tel : +971 434 68 649  
Fax: +971 434 68 462  
[www.galleryetmad.com](http://www.galleryetmad.com)